

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

151615Z May 00

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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AID-00	AMAD-01	ACQ-00	CIAE-00	SMEC-00
	INL-01	DODE-00	DOEE-00	SRPP-00	DS-00	EB-00	EUR-01
	UTED-00	VC-01	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01
	L-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	OPIC-01
	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	STR-00
	TRSE-00	USIE-00	R-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-01	DRL-02
	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	/014W			

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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6049
INFO AMEMBASSY LILONGWE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY WINDHOEK
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS

UNCLAS HARARE 002609

SIPDIS

LONDON FOR PFLAUMER
PARIS FOR BISA WILLIAMS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [ZI](#)

SUBJECT: NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY PEACE RALLY
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VIOLENTLY DISRUPTED BY THE POLICE AND WAR VETERANS

1. ON MAY 13, THE CIVIL SOCIETY UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION, THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY'S (NCA), "PEACE RALLY," WHICH WAS TO BE HELD IN HARARE'S SPORTS STADIUM, WAS DISRUPTED AFTER THE POLICE AND ABOUT 50 WAR VETERANS VIOLENTLY DISPERSED PEOPLE ATTEMPTING TO ENTER THE VENUE. EYEWITNESSES TOLD EMBOFFS THAT THE VETERANS BEGAN BEATING THOSE ATTENDING THE RALLY WITH STICKS, IRON BARS, AND STONES. ATTENDEES AT THE ABORTED RALLY, INCLUDING AN FSN AND MISSION EMPLOYEE, REPORT THAT THE POLICE, WORKING IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE WAR VETERANS, TOLD THE GATHERING CROWD THAT THE MEETING WAS CANCELED. THE GOVERNMENT-INFLUENCED "THE HERALD" NEWSPAPER, AND THE ZIMBABWE BROADCASTING CORPORATION (ZBC) REPORTED THAT THE NCA RALLY HAD "FLOPPED" BECAUSE OF POOR ATTENDANCE AND MADE LITTLE MENTION OF THE REPORTS OF POLICE AND WAR VETERANS THREATENING AND DISPERSING THE NCA CROWD EVEN BEFORE THE RALLY BEGAN. THE INDEPENDENTLY OWNED "THE SUNDAY STANDARD", HOWEVER, CARRIED A TOTALLY CONTRADICTORY HEADLINE ACCUSING THE POLICE AND WAR VETS OF ATTACKING THE NCA.

2. SEVERAL CONTACTS REPORTED THAT THE WAR VETERANS ARRIVED IN TWO "ZANU-PF TRUCKS" AT THE STADIUM, TWO HOURS BEFORE THE RALLY AND BEGAN TO BEAT UP AND HARASS THE NCA ADVANCE SECURITY TEAM AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO HAD BEGUN TO ASSEMBLE AS EARLY AS 8 AM. THE NCA NATIONAL COORDINATOR, ISAAC MAPHOSA, TOLD EMBOFFS THAT TWO SYMPATHETIC CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS (CIO) HAD COME TO THE NCA OFFICE AT 9:00 AM ON THE DAY OF THE RALLY TO INFORM HIM OF "ZANU-PF'S PLAN" TO DISRUPT THE RALLY. MAPHOSA
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IMMEDIATELY RUSHED TO THE STADIUM TO CHECK ON THE SITUATION AND FOUND PANDEMONIUM, AS PEOPLE WERE FLEEING FROM THE WAR VETERANS WHO WERE ATTACKING THEM. MAPHOSA SAID THAT SOME NCA MEMBERS QUICKLY FLED THE SCENE WITH HIM IN HIS VEHICLE, AT WHICH POINT THE WAR VETERANS IMMEDIATELY CHASED THE NCA COORDINATOR'S CAR. THE VETS PURSUED THE NCA MEMBERS IN THEIR OWN VEHICLE FOR MORE THAN 20 MINUTES THROUGH THE CITY CENTER UNTIL THE NCA GROUP MANAGED TO ESCAPE FROM THEM.

3. MEANWHILE, AT THE STADIUM, THE POLICE CONTINUED TURNING AWAY THE NCA SUPPORTERS, INCLUDING A LARGE NUMBER OF UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE STUDENTS WHO HAD COME INTO TOWN, INFORMING THEM THAT THE RALLY HAD BEEN CANCELED. THE NCA LEADERS ALSO TOLD EMBOFFS THAT THERE WERE TWO BUSES FULL OF ZANU-PF SUPPORTERS AT THE RULING PARTY'S HEADQUARTERS WAITING TO BE TRANSPORTED TO THE NCA RALLY TO DISRUPT THE PROCEEDINGS. IN LIGHT OF THIS INFORMATION, THE NCA LEADERSHIP CONCLUDED THAT IT WAS NO LONGER SAFE TO CONTINUE WITH THE RALLY AND THEN CANCELED IT.

14. COMMENT: THE NCA'S MAY 13 RALLY WAS THE FIRST MASS ACTION THE ORGANIZATION HAS ATTEMPTED SINCE WAR VETERANS AND ZANU-PF YOUTH ATTACKED A PEACEFUL NCA MARCH THROUGH DOWNTOWN HARARE ON APRIL 1, SERIOUSLY INJURING SEVERAL PEOPLE. THIS LATEST ATTACK LENDS MORE SUBSTANCE TO ACCUSATIONS THAT ZANU-PF IS CONTINUING TO ENGAGE IN VICIOUS PHYSICAL ASSAULTS ON OPPOSITION SUPPORTERS, AS WELL AS ESCALATING ITS VITRIOLIC CAMPAIGN AGAINST ANYONE DEEMED TO BE OPPOSED TO THE GOVERNMENT. CONSEQUENTLY, THE RULING PARTY IS MOVING TO THWART ANY DISSENT OR PUBLIC PROTEST OF ANY KIND. THE NCA, HOWEVER, HAS VOWED NOT TO BE SILENCED
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BY THE WAR VETERANS AND SAYS IT WILL FIND OTHER WAYS OF PROTESTING THE POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND LACK OF DEMOCRACY IN ZIMBABWE IN THE RUN-UP TO THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION.

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